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FEEDING THE WAR WORKER

Speech by the Hon. Eugene Casey, Special Executive Assistant to the President,
before the Kiwanis Club, New York, N. Y., May 4, 1943 1/

Food to maintain the war worker's health, energy, and will to work is as important to victory as food for our armed forces and our Allies. Our food-rationing program recognizes this. It permits the allocation of food to all war plants that provide in-plant feeding. All food eaten in the plant cafeteria or the nearby restaurant is, in effect, supplementing the worker's ration allowance. No ration stamps are submitted by the worker for this food. Every possible effort is being made by the War Food Administration and the Office of Price Administration to assure adequate food supplies and equipment for in-plant food service. Unfortunately, more than 60 percent of our war plants employing 250 or more workers do not now have in-plant feeding facilities.

It is an important responsibility of management today to provide some type of factory feeding service. There are four types that can be used: cafeterias, lunch counters, mobile or stationary canteen units, or lunch box services.

Great Britain has found in-plant feeding so important in keeping the worker on the job and maintaining efficiency to meet production goals that all factories with 250 or more employees can be required to have some type of factory feeding. More than 96 percent of the British factories with 250 or more employees and 7,500 smaller factories now have canteen service. Where it has been impossible to provide canteens, units of British restaurants have been developed in suitable places for groups of smaller factories. By this program, workers obtain food in addition to their rations.

Even prior to food rationing in this country, war conditions were increasing the dependence of employees upon in-plant feeding. Employment of women, shortage of housing, inadequate restaurant facilities, and transportation problems make in-plant feeding more essential for the maintenance of production, the reduction of absenteeism, and the conservation of manpower and food. With food rationed, in-plant feeding becomes even more necessary.

Your Government recognized this growing need for the extension of in-plant feeding and the need for nutrition education to help workers and their families make the best use of available foods. It established a Nutrition in Industry Division which is now in the Food Distribution Administration of the War Food Administration. This Division, offers without cost to management, free technical advisory service on food problems. This service is available upon request to plants of all sizes where new feeding facilities are to be installed or existing services are to be extended. Requests for the service may be sent to Dr. Robert S. Goodhart, Chief, Nutrition in Industry Division, Food Distribution Administration, Washington, or to any one of the regional FDA offices. Industrial nutrition regional representatives will make an on-the-ground survey of the factory feeding problems and recommend practical solutions. In this region the industrial nutrition representative is Dr. H. F. Kilander, 150 Broadway, New York City. The surveys and recommendations are confidential unless permission for their publication is granted by the management.

1/ Mimeographed and distributed by the Food Distribution Administration, United States Department of Agriculture.

In plants where workers travel a considerable distance to their work, it has been recommended that the food service in the plant provide breakfast as well as lunch for workers on all shifts. When breakfast is omitted, production begins at a low point the first hour in the morning. There is a sharp decline in efficiency during the forenoon. A much higher level of productivity is attained immediately after lunch, but again a sharp decline occurs during the afternoon. When breakfast is included in the day's meals, the chief improvement in production is during the morning hours.

When mid-morning and mid-afternoon feedings of nutritious food, such as orange or grapefruit juice or tomato juice, or milk and sandwiches are taken in addition to the regular meals, production reaches a higher and more uniform rate throughout the day, according to scientific experiments.

Cafeterias are not always the practical solution. Sometimes the industrial nutrition representative has recommended the installation of simple lunch counters or mobile units that can be serviced from a central kitchen and taken into all departments.

In all cases the recommendations have called for simplification of menus to speed up service, to provide adequate balanced meals with resulting savings in labor and food, and reduced absenteeism due to illness or fatigue. A lunch should be more than a snack. It should provide at least 1/3 the daily food requirements of basic foods. A cold lunch may be as nutritious as a hot lunch, if the right choice of foods is made.

If hot lunches are served, a choice of two "Lunch Specials" is recommended. A lunch special might include: fish or poultry, meat, eggs, beans or cheese; a potato, and a yellow or green vegetable, a raw vegetable salad, fruit or milk dessert, and choice of beverage including milk.

The "Lunch Special," called a "Victory Lunch" in an Evansville, Ind., plant became so popular that it was selected by 85 percent of the employees. It is significant that absenteeism was cut 19 percent in the first 4 months after the "Victory Lunch" program was adopted.

Ways in which the workers may be encouraged to choose the "Lunch Special" or make better choice of available foods and alternates offered to replace food shortages are part of the Nutrition in Industry advisory service to war plants. Suggested menus for hot or cold lunches, articles for plant publications and bulletin boards, posters and other materials may be obtained by writing the Nutrition in Industry Division, Washington. I have here a Manual of Industrial Nutrition which is just off the press. I think all of you will be interested in obtaining a copy.

It may be that an in-plant food service will be some expense to management. Where adequate food service is now provided, management seems to feel any expense is as justified for a good food service as it is for any other safety and health program. The National Association of Manufacturers medical and health consultant, Dr. Victor Heiser, and the U. S. Public Health Service Industrial Hygiene Division urge the provision of in-plant feeding wherever possible.

Some plants provide a food service under plant management. Others engage a concessionaire. Whichever plan is adopted, it is to the advantage of the

employer and the workers to have the plant provide a dietitian. The dietitian can more than save her salary in guiding the food planning, buying, preparation and service to reduce labor and food waste and to improve the health and morale of the workers.

There is an increasing recognition on the part of management that in-plant food service is necessary, but action in installing the service is still lagging behind the need.

Arthur C. Dorrance, President, Campbell Soup Company, Camden, N.J. where food service is provided for workers says, "Well-fed workers on the production front are as vital to Victory as well-fed soldiers on the fighting front. Nutritious meals served in attractive surroundings build morale, promote efficiency, and reduce absenteeism."

O. S. Swayze, Assistant General Manager, Eastern Aircraft, Linden, N.J. division of General Motors, says, "With the fast tempo and added pressure of war work, the working man and woman in the plant today deserves and must have proper food. Plant cafeterias should pay special attention to supply good, wholesome, nutritious food in the meals they serve their employees."

Through the progress made in nutrition science since the last war, we now know our basic food needs and the foods that provide the best food values. A popular chart of these foods, called the "Basic 7" includes the food groups we should include in our meals every day. The Basic 7 are: Group 1, GREEN AND YELLOW VEGETABLES; Group 2, ORANGES, TOMATOES, GRAPEFRUIT or Raw Cabbage or Salad Greens; Group 3, POTATOES AND OTHER VEGETABLES AND FRUITS; Group 4, MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS; Group 5, MEAT, POULTRY, FISH or EGGS, or dried beans, peas, nuts or peanut butter; Group 6, BREAD, FLOUR and CEREALS, natural whole grain or enriched or restored; Group 7, BUTTER AND FORTIFIED MARGARINE.

Many of us do not recognize the difference between what the basic food requirements are to maintain health, and what we think is necessary because of the food habits we established in peacetime.

For instance, as workers' earnings increased, their meat-eating increased. Reports show that many were eating as much as 7 to 9 pounds of meat a week, when they could get all they wanted. The civilian consumption of meat in 1941 exceeded by 15 pounds per person the average consumed in the 1935-39 period. Yet nutrition scientists and medical authorities say that even the biggest men doing the hardest work will not suffer by eating as little as 1 1/2 pounds of meat a week, if he eats sufficient amounts of other strength and health-building foods in the "Basic 7" each day. Not more than one third of the daily protein requirements need be supplied by animal protein. This amount can be satisfactorily secured from poultry, fish, milk, and eggs. The balance of the protein needs can be supplied readily from vegetable sources such as whole-grain or restored cereals, bread, peas, dried beans, lentils, soybeans, peanuts and nuts.

Nutrition science also has made it possible for us to know that such unrationed foods as enriched and whole-grain bread and whole grain and fortified cereals are useful sources of the "morale" vitamin B1. Without sufficient amounts of foods providing this vitamin, workers become irritable and tired in a few weeks. Thus, nutrition science has shown that food can play an important

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part in employer-employee relations and in production, as well as in health protection.

When the President called the Nutrition Conference just 2 years ago this month, the National Nutrition Program, which has helped to make all Americans more aware of their personal responsibility in eating right to keep fit, was launched. The continued loyal cooperation and activities of thousands of volunteers serving on the 48 State committees and their sub-committees on Industrial Nutrition, and the more than 2,600 county committees and community committees, and the millions of dollars in advertising that has been contributed by industry, press, and radio, are valuable aids to the Nutrition Program and the conservation of manpower and food.

Never before has our country faced the problem of utilizing so great an amount of its food resources to wage a world war. It means new problems for Government, for employers, and for employees. Only by cooperating in meeting these problems can we make the adjustments that are necessary to win the war.

Food is a weapon of war as vital as guns. By sharing our food with our armed forces and peoples in countries where loyalty to the United Nations is necessary to Victory, each of us has a part in winning the war. It may mean pulling in our belts. That may mean a longer and a healthier life for those who are over-weight. It need not mean sacrificing health, strength, or the will to work and win, while workers, employers, and Government cooperate on the home front.

